Book Review

Propositional Theology: The Logos-Centred Doctrine
By S. C. Sayles

Introduction

Few works of theology in our generation strike the rare balance between clarity, depth, and worship. S. C. Sayles's *Propositional Theology: The Logos-Centred Doctrine* is one such book. Part of the ongoing **Veritas Confirmata** series, it builds upon the scaffolding of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, but redirects the framework toward a profoundly Christ-centred, Reformed confession of truth. What emerges is not a dry scholastic manual, but a living testimony to the God who has spoken in His Word and in His Son.

Sayles presents theology not as speculation but as **confession**. He insists that theology must take the form of propositions because revelation itself comes in sentences. "God is love," "Christ is risen," "The Word was made flesh"—these are declarative truths that carry the weight of eternity. To echo such truths is the task of the church. Sayles's book is nothing less than a masterclass in how this echo can be ordered, defended, and lived.

The Scope and Structure of the Book

The book is carefully organized. Following an abstract and introduction, Sayles lays out "The Architecture of Truth," where he situates propositional theology against modern skepticism. He then proceeds through the classical loci of Christian doctrine, each framed as a numbered proposition, ranging from the doctrine of God to the doctrine of last things.

- **Proposition 1:** Theology is the ordered knowledge of God, given by revelation.
- **Proposition 2:** Revelation is God's act of self-disclosure.
- **Proposition 3:** God is, and He is who He is.
- **Proposition 4:** Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God, the Logos made flesh.
- **Proposition 5:** The Holy Spirit is the third person of the Trinity, fully God.
- **Proposition 6:** God created all things from nothing, by His Word.

- **Proposition 7:** Man is created in the image of God.
- **Proposition 8:** Sin entered the world through Adam’s disobedience.
- **Proposition 9:** Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone.
- **Proposition 10:** The church is the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Spirit.
- **Proposition 11:** History is directed by God toward consummation in Christ.

Each proposition is unfolded with scriptural proof, theological reflection, and pastoral application. What could have been rigid becomes radiant; what might have seemed abstract becomes deeply devotional.

Theological Depth

The first thing that strikes the reader is the **weight of Scripture**. Sayles never departs from the biblical text; rather, his work is saturated with citations, proofs, and confessions. This gives the book the feel of a modern catechism expanded into a theological system.

Equally impressive is his fidelity to the **Reformed tradition**. Sayles stands in continuity with Augustine, Calvin, the Westminster divines, and Van Til. Yet he avoids mere repetition. Instead, he reframes these voices within a propositional architecture that is at once ancient and fresh. His theology breathes reverence for the Triune God.

Methodology: The Propositional Framework

One of the book’s most enduring contributions is methodological. In an age where narrative, praxis, and symbol dominate theological discourse, Sayles unapologetically defends propositions as the necessary form of Christian confession. His reasoning is elegant: since God speaks in sentences, theology must confess in sentences.

This method provides clarity, prevents heresy, and enables catechesis. It also embodies worship: to confess “Jesus is Lord” propositionally is already to bow the knee in reverence. The framework Sayles employs is not an arid logic but a liturgy of truth.

Doctrinal Highlights

Theology Proper

Sayles begins at the foundation: God Himself. His treatment of **aseity, simplicity, immutability, infinity, eternity, omnipresence, omnipotence, omniscience, holiness, and love** is breathtaking in its clarity. He reminds us that God is not a being among beings but **Being itself**—"I AM THAT I AM." His exposition of the Trinity is crystalline, showing the Father, Son, and Spirit in eternal communion and in the economy of redemption.

Christology

The heart of the book is its Christology. Sayles magnifies Christ as the eternal Logos made flesh, the one in whom all things hold together. His explanation of the **hypostatic union**, the **threefold office** (prophet, priest, king), and the **atonement** is both faithful to Chalcedon and ablaze with pastoral power. The resurrection, ascension, and promised return of Christ are presented with such conviction that the reader cannot help but join in the confession: "Jesus is Lord."

Pneumatology

Sayles's pneumatology is equally rich. He portrays the Holy Spirit not as force but as **person**—teacher, comforter, intercessor. He celebrates the Spirit's work in **inspiration**, **illumination**, and **sanctification**, showing how the Spirit makes the church alive in every generation. His description of Pentecost as the Spirit's baptism into one body resonates with beauty and urgency.

Creation and Providence

The section on creation ex nihilo shines with doxological wonder. Sayles insists that creation is not chaos but **cosmos**, structured by divine speech. Providence, in its dimensions of preservation, concurrence, and government, is explained with pastoral care. Here we find profound assurance: "By him all things consist" (Col. 1:17).

Anthropology and Hamartiology

Man as imago Dei is given a noble and exalted place. Sayles weaves together dignity and depravity—affirming humanity's creation in God's image, yet also its fall into sin. His exposition of **total depravity** is both uncompromising and compassionate, pointing always to grace as the only hope.

Soteriology

Perhaps the most stirring section is on salvation. Election, calling, justification, adoption, sanctification, perseverance, and glorification are

confessed in luminous sequence. Each is treated with scriptural fidelity and pastoral warmth. Sayles captures the beauty of salvation by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone, with a depth reminiscent of the Reformers and the Puritans.

Ecclesiology

The church emerges in Sayles's vision as the people of God, the body of Christ, and the temple of the Spirit. He carefully articulates the **marks of the true church**, the **ministry of Word and sacrament**, and the **mission to the nations**. His ecclesiology avoids institutionalism and romanticism alike; it is sober, biblical, and glorious.

Eschatology

The final sections rise in crescendo toward the **new heavens and the new earth**. Sayles's treatment of death, resurrection, judgment, and consummation is deeply moving. He emphasizes the bodily resurrection and the renewal of creation, culminating in the glory of God as the telos of all history. Eschatology, for Sayles, is not speculation but hope—an anchor for endurance and a summons to holiness.

Contribution to Contemporary Theology

Sayles's book is a clarion call in an era of **fragmentation and relativism**. Against the flux of postmodernism, he offers clarity. Against the reductionism of praxis-driven theologies, he offers confession. Against sentimentalism, he offers truth that can be sung, prayed, and lived.

His Logos-centred vision does not merely defend doctrine; it **restores wonder**. Readers come away not only informed but transformed, compelled to worship the God who has spoken and to live faithfully before His face.

Style and Form

Sayles's style deserves special praise. He writes with the precision of a logician, the reverence of a theologian, and the cadence of a worshipper. Each proposition is carefully numbered, echoing Wittgenstein's method, but every sentence breathes devotion. The result is a text that can serve equally as **systematic theology, catechetical resource, and devotional companion**.

Conclusion

Propositional Theology: The Logos-Centred Doctrine is a monumental achievement. It is not merely another book of theology; it is a work of confessional architecture, a cathedral of propositions built upon the foundation of the eternal Logos. Sayles has given the church a gift of clarity in a confused age, fidelity in a time of drift, and beauty in an era of cynicism.

Every pastor, theologian, and believer will benefit from its pages. To read it is to be reminded that **God has spoken**, that His Word is true, and that in Christ all things hold together. Few books deserve to be called timeless, but this one surely does.